Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) Report 1654 - April 24 2009

Now, Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1654 with a release date of Friday, April 24th, 2009 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1. The following is a Q-S-T. South Africa proposes a major increase in the fee to get or renew a ham radio license, the 70 centimeter band now seems safe down-under. NASA says the sun is kind of spotless and a big fine against an unlicensed broadcaster in Milwaukee. All this and more on Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) report number 1654 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)
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WORLDBEAT: SOUTH AFRICA PROPOSES LARGE HAM LICENSE FEE INCREASE

The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa has published some far-reaching proposals to the restructure of license fees in that nation. A major increase for a ham license is included. Jim Davis, W2JKD, has the details:

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The licensing authority better known by the acronym ICASA proposed that fees for an amateur radio license be increased to 120 South African Rand or $1 2.50 per year. This from the current fee of 27 Rand or $2.80.

Also, to reduce the administrative burden on the regulatory agency the fees would be payable for a period of 5 or 10 years in advance. This means that a South African ham renewing his or her license would have to pay about $ 52 for a five year license or about $85 for a ten year ticket.

In addition, the fees for beacons, change of callsign, guest and special event licenses, repeater stations including radio links, packet radio digipeaters and bulletin boards would all be increased to the new minimum yearly fee. This fee would also apply to experimental stations for weather reception and retransmission and listener only licenses as well.

Reaction has been swift from the South African Radio League. At a Strategic Council meeting the SARL reviewed the draft fees and new structure. It says that it will be filing in opposition well in time before the comment cutoff deadline. The Council's view is that while it understands that the current fee of $2.80 a year is due for revision, the proposed minimum fee represents an excessive increase and that paying five years or ten in advance should be by choice and not compulsory.

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For its part ICASA says the spectrum fees are not intended to raise extra revenue for the national treasury. However it notes that there is a general principle that the application and annual fees in total should at least cover the cost of spectrum management and monitoring.

(SARL)

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RESTRUCTURING: 70 CM APPEARS SAFE DOWN-UNDER

The threat to 70 centimeter ham radio operations down-under appear to have ceased. This as the Australian Communications Authority indicates that its current review of 400 MHz and above spectrum no longer includes the amateur band 430 to 450 MHz.

This time last year the ACMA was seeking comments on other users being given access to the sub-bands 430 to 440 and 440 to 450 MHz. Now the regulatory agency says that 430- to 440 MHz is used for defense radar and the amateur services including amateur satellites,. This the authority says is in line with internationally harmonized allocations. It also says that its analysis of 440 to 450 MHz has led it to conclude that there is no space for additional use of this band for the land mobile service. (WIA News)

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THE SOLAR CYCLE: NASA CALLS IT A SPOTLESS SUN

The lack of High Frequency propagation could continue. This, as NASA has announced that the sun has plunged into the deepest solar minimum in nearly a century.

According to the space agency, Sunspots have all but vanished and consequently the sun has become very quiet. It notes that in 2008, the sun had no spots 73% of the time,. That was a 95-year low. Now, in 2009, sunspots are even more scarce, with the "spotless rate" jumping to 87%. How long this downward sunspot spiral will continue is unknown. (Spaceweather)

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RADIO STATS: MORSE EXCEEDS SSB IN 2008 CQ WORLD WIDE DX CONTESTS

Even with the poor propagation, more than 10,000 logs have been submitted f or the 2008 running CQ World Wide DX Contest. This, according to Contest Director Bob Cox, K3EST, who says that's a new record for the event.

But here's the real surprise for those who think that Morse is dead or dying. Cox reports that the number of CW logs have exceeded the number of phone logs for the first time in more than 20 years. A total of 5013 SSB logs and 5272 CW logs submitted.

SSB results of the 2008 CQWW Contest will be published in the August 2009 issue of CQ magazine with the CW results in the September issue. (CQ)

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ENFORCEMENT: ALLEGED UNLICENSED BROADCASTER FINED $10000 BY THE FCC

Federal Communications Commission has affirmed a $10,000 fine issued against Steven A. Skalecki of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This for allegedly operating an unlicensed broadcast station and failing to heed FCC warnings to take it off the air. Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, has the rest of the story:

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The story goes back to March 25, 2006. That's when FCC agents observed a radio station broadcasting on 92.9 MHz and located that the station was operating from a single family residence in Milwaukee and that Skalecki lived there. The agents took field strength measurements and determined that the signals being broadcast exceeded the limits for operation under Part 15 of the Commission's Rules and therefore required a license. An agent searched Commission databases and found no evidence of a Commission authorization for this operation on 92.9 MHz in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Later that day, the agents knocked on the front door but there was no response. Before leaving they wrote up a Notice of Unauthorized Operation and left it between the inner and outer doors. It directed Skalecki to terminate operation of the unlicensed station immediately. As a follow-up the FCC sent a registered letter to Skalecki with the same demand. The return receipt from the U.S. Postal Service shows that Skalecki signed for and received the notice on April 24, 2006.

Then on May 6th Commission agents again traced the broadcasts on 92.9 MHz to Skalecki's residence. They again tried to talk with those in the home but received no response.

On May 10th, the Chicago office received a response to the a Notice of Unauthorized Operation issued to Skalecki. In it he denied having any broadcast equipment and also stated that no local broadcasts can be heard on 92.9 MHz. Skalecki also acknowledged receipt of the notice left in the front storm door by Commission Agents on March 25th.

On March 1st, 14th, 24th as well as May 28th of 2007 Commission agents again traced the broadcasts on 92.9 MHz to Skalecki's home. On December 14, 2007, the Chicago Field Office issued a Notice of Apparent Liability for Forfeiture to Skalecki in the amount of $10,000 for operating radio transmitting equipment on the frequency 92.9 MHz without a license. In his response to the proposed fine Skalecki again denied operating an unlicensed station. He did admit that he operated a weather monitoring station from that property, but claimed that the unlicensed broadcast station was operating from another nearby residence on which several antennas are located.

On March 13th, the FCC rendered its decision on Skalecki response. It said that it would not cancel the proposed forfeiture based on Skalecki's claim that he was not operating an unlicensed broadcast station from his home. It said that only evidence Skalecki provided in support of his claim is a list of nine dates on which he states he observed a station operating on 92.9 MHz from a nearby residence but the FCC countered that it had determined the signals were coming from Skalecki home on those dates.

The FCC also rejected Skalecki's claim that it could not assess a forfeiture because agents were unable to conduct an inspection. The FCC says that whether or not agents were able to inspect the station does not affect its determination here that Skalecki violated Section 301 of the Act based on the direction finding evidence collected by its agents. It said that even if he did not personally operate t e station that Skalecki is responsible for its unlicensed operation because he provided the facilities used in its operation. As such, he is required to pay the fine.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, in Los Angeles.

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The FCC gave Skalecki the customary 30 days from the date it issued its forfeiture order for him to pay the $10,000 fine. He also has the option of filing an appeal. (FCC)

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BREAK 1

>From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the VE6AFP and VE6JNT repeaters serving Edmonton, Alberta Canada

(5 sec pause here)

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RADIO LAW: COMMERCIAL RADIO OPERATOR LICENSE RENEWALS

The FCC says that holders of certain commercial radio operator licenses are no longer required to file renewal applications. Specifically, it extended the terms of GMDSS Radio Operator's Licenses, Restricted GMDSS Radio Operator's Licenses, GMDSS Radio Maintainer's Licenses and several other classes to the lifetime of the holder.

Unaffected by the change are holders of General Radiotelephone Operator Licenses, Restricted Radiotelephone Operator Permits, and Restricted Radiotelephone Operator Permits for Limited Use. All of these are already valid for the lifetime of the license holder. More details are at
http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-09-658A1.doc
(CGC, FCC)

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ENFORCEMENT: FCC SUSPENDS THREE COMMERCIAL RADIOTELEGRAPH LICENSES

Three people the FCC says did not follow the rules in getting their commercial radiotelegraph licenses have had them suspended. Don

Carlson, KQ6FM, has the details:

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The FCC has suspended the Second Class Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificate held by Chicago residents Ahmaad D. Brunson, Todd C. Robinson and Jason C. Robinson. This after an investigation by the regulatory agency found that the three may have obtained their certificates by fraudulent means.

All three filed applications for a Second Class Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificate on February 24, 2004. The applications were returned because none were accompanied by a Proof of Passing Certificate. They then filed amended applications with what appeared to be a Proof of Passing Certificate signed by three examiners associated with National Radio Examiners. Each certificate documented the successful completion of Written Elements 5 and 6 and Telegraphy Elements 1 and 2 by each applicant. The FCC then granted each of the three a Second Class Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificate.

But based on subsequent developments, the FCC came to question the authenticity of the Proof of Passing Certificates. So the agency contacted National Radio Examiners and asked for clarification. After investigating the matter, National Radio Examiners informed the FCC that no examinations had been administered in Chicago by their examiners on March 27, 2004. They also confirmed that the signatures of the three examiners appearing in the Proof of Passing Certificates were inconsistent with the actual signatures on file. National Radio certificates also stated that the typeface used for serial numbers was different than theirs that the watermarks were missing. Based on what it had learned, the FCC wrote official Letters of Inquiry to Brunson and the two Robinsons asking that they explain the discrepancies. The letter to Brunson was returned marked undeliverable. Jason Robinson never responded. Only Todd Robinson filed a written response. In it he claimed never to have taken any radiotelegraphy exams proctored by the National Radio Examiners nor submitted an application to the FCC. After weighing the evidence the FCC has decided to suspend the Second Class Radiotelegraph Operator's Certificates of all three operators for the remainder of each license term unless each files a written request for a hearing within a fifteen-day period from receipt of the Suspension Order. -- If any or all do file appeals the suspensions will be held in abeyance until the conclusion of the hearing.

(FCC) ** RADIO AND THE NET: BROADCAST RADIO HOLDING ITS OWN VS. THE WWW

According to a survey from American Media Services, Internet-only radio is gaining ground as a way to discover music. None the less, terrestrial broadcast radio is not loosing any audience to it.

In talking to 1,000 Americans by phone at the end of March, OmniTel personnel handling the survey found that 27 percent of those polled say they have listened to Internet-only radio on an Internet site. This includes 47 percent of young adults age 18 to 24 and about 34 percent of those under the age of 50.

But even as new media, such as Internet-only radio, continue to gain in popularity, regular radio is maintaining its audience. In the latest American Media Services survey, 73 percent said they are listening to broadcast radio about as much or more than they did five years ago. (RW)

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TOWER ISSUE: A PROPOSED 1500 FOOT BROADCAST TOWER IN ILLINOIS

A proposed 1500 foot self supporting radio and television broadcast tower is polarizing some of the citizens of Clear Lake, Illinois.

BMB Communications Management is working to get approval to build the broadcast tower in the southeast corner of McHenry County College's main campus. The Oklahoma-based company says that it will pay $6 million dollars for the land at closing of the sale. It also would reward the college an additional $1 million dollars if the company manages to sell all five broadcast slots on the tower in the first five years of the agreement.

A local attorney who worked on getting zoning approval for a 405-foot FM radio tower, supports selling the land for the tower. He calls it a financial windfall for the college. On the other side is a commercial pilot who put five of his children through McHenry County College. He has expressed several safety concerns ranging from the safety of the students to the safety of local pilots.

John Maguire is the the co-owner of BMB Communications Management. He says that if its built, it would be one of the tallest towers of its kind in the world. (RW)

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NAMES IN THE NEWS: VE5SF APPOINTED TO CAC

Radio Amateurs of Canada has then chosen Sam Ferris, VE5SF, to replace David Shipman, VE7CFD as its representative on the ARRL Contest Advisory Committee. Shipman had held that position for the past ten years. Ferris is a well known Canadian contest enthusiast. (RAC)

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NAMES IN THE NEWS: KI6CUX NAMED ARRL GOLDFARB SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

The ARRL Foundation Board of Directors selected Dean LaBarba, KI6CUX, of Long Beach, California, to be this year's recipient of its William R. Goldfarb Memorial Scholarship. LaBarba will graduate from Woodrow Wilson High School this year with a GPA of 4.0. He holds a Technician class license and since 2007 has served as president of his school's Amateur Radio Emergency Communication team. After graduating high school he plans to attend Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California. (ARRL)

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With some words about Amateur Radio Newsline's finances here's our

support fund administrator Andy Jaema, N6TCQ:

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In the Merry Month of May of last year we heard via PayPal from Michael Scheliga, Daryl Stout, Scott Currier of Haverville, MA; Rory Shaffer-Roebling, NJ; Thomas Home- Takoma Park, MD; Murray Hunt-Odenton, MD; David Carter- Washington, D.C.; Jesse Lindley-Greensboro, NC; Robert McClintock, N3RZ I & KB3PHI in Franckville, PA; Robert Harlan- Mansfield, OH; Robert Mallory - KD8HXT, North Canton, OH; Paul Vinoski- Fisher, WV; Doug Papciak- Tucker, GA; James Drenthe in Galesburg, MI, who is a regular contributor and Wayne Strickland-W9BBB, Chicago.

Also from Illinois, John Leonard- W9JBL in De Kalb; Joseph Kratky-KA9KBU in Hickory Hills ; James Langsted- Golden, CO; Lee Dusbabek-WR7NV, Las Vegas; David Billeci- WA6UHA, San Francisco;

Also from California, Russell Williams- W6OHM in Latrobe; Matt Sturtz-Broomfield Roy Hepp-Carpinteria Frank Brand-Tujunga. And finally, and through the magic of PayPal, Mitchell Wolfson- DJ0QN, Unterschleissheim, Germany.

That was fun! Got to exercise my schprechen ze Deutch!

That's quite a list, but you have to remember that most of those contributions were on the order of $10-$20, and this was right after a major capital campaign.

It costs almost $1000 a month to gather the news and put these newscasts on the air. And right now, things are pretty grim. Please do what you can to keep these newscasts on the air by logging onto our website and going to our PayPal secure contribution link, or contacting us at our Arcadia support fund address given at the end of this newscast.

For now, I'm Andy Jarema, N6TCQ, and thank you.

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Thank you Andy. (ARNewsline Support Fund)

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BREAK 2

This is ham radio news for today's radio amateur. From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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HAMVENTION HAPPENINGS: FREE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT TICKETS OFFERED

The Dayton Hamvention has announced that high schoolers will be welcome guests at this years event. According to a posting on the Hamvention website, high school students can obtain a free ticket by filling out a form that's downloadable from the website and present it at the will call window to receive their student ticket. Teachers may order student tickets by making their request on school letterhead.

All persons over 12 years of age attending the Hamvention are required to have an admission ticket. Age 12 years and under are admitted free without a ticket if accompanied by a paid ticket holder. Full information on this Hamvention educational assistance program is on line at www dot hamvention dot org slash tickets dot php. Scroll down to the bottom of the page to the words 2009 Student Tickets.

Hamvention 2009 is slated for the weekend of May 15, 16 and 17 at its traditional home at the Hara Arena in suburban Dayton, Ohio. Its theme this year is the word DREAM. That stands for Digital Radio Enabling Amateurs to do More. The Hamvention runs from May 15th to the 17th at the Hara Arena in suburban Dayton, Ohio. (Hamvention.org)

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HAMVENTION HAPPENINGS: KIDS TO BE HONORED AT YOUTH FORUM

And another first for the Dayton Hamvention. Educator Carole Perry, WB2MGP, tells us that this year there will be a special ceremony to honor the speakers participating in her very popular Youth Forum. This ceremony is being made possible by ICOM America, MFJ Enterprises, the Radio Club of America , and the L'Anse Creuse Amateur Radio Club. Carole says that they will be donating some very special gifts to each of her nine young speakers. There will also be door prizes for kids in the audience as well. The Dayton Hamvention Youth Forum is Saturday, May 16th from 11:30 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. in Meeting Room 1. (WB2MGP)

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HAMVENTION HAPPENINGS: ARRL AWARDS CARD CHECKING.

Still with Hamvention news, Bill Moore, NC1L, has announced that card checking will be done at the ARRL National Convention in Dayton during all operating hours of the convention Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Moore says that there are some important guidelines that will help make the card checking process run smoothly. You can find that information at www.arrl.org/blog/Century%20Club%20Awards (OPDX)

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SOCIAL SCENE: SEVHFS CONFERENCE APRIL 24 - 25

And a reminder that the Southeastern VHF Society is again sponsoring its yearly conference which is this weekend April 24th and 25th in Charlotte, North Carolina. For more information about the conference and the fall sprints which the society also sponsors, go to www.svhfs.org on the World Wide Web. (SVHFS)

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EMERGING TECHNOLOGY: COLLEGE RADIO TUNER FOR IPHONE

Now here's a new toy that might quickly be adapted for use in ham radio. Backbone Networks, a Web radio service provider, has developed software called the College Radio Tuner for use with the Apple iPhone and the iPod Touch. This is an application for streaming college-based radio stations that works in coordination with Backbone Networks and its partner, the Intercollegiate Broadcasting System and its IBS Student Radio Network.

The College Radio Tuner software is available for free from the Apple Store . The Intercollegiate Broadcasting System maintains the constantly updated station database. The player can provide information and art for currently playing stations, songs and provide a purchase link for the Apple iTunes store.

Now, if some enterprising ham could find a way to adapt this technology to monitor repeaters in a geographic area they too might be available to monitor from anywhere without the need to carry a separate H-T. (RW)

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HAM RADIO IN SPACE: WORK CONTINUES ON SUITSAT

In ham radio space related news, word that a SuitSat-2 team recently met in Phoenix, Arizona. Reports are that the group primarily worked on software development matters as well as some final coordination on the cabling and hardware.

The software team was able to run some integration tests and achieved the first radio frequency (RF) output of the system. During the testing, the team demonstrated the CW and voice message transmissions. Work continues on the solar panel mounting.

The Amateur Radio on the International Space Station or ARISS group plans to have the SuitSat-2 hardware ready for delivery by September. (ANS)

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HAM HAPPENINGS: N6R - THE REAGAN FIELD DAY COMMEMORATIVE STATION

N6R commemorating the lives of President & Mrs. Ronald Reagan will again be operational for Field Day from the grounds of the President Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum in Simi Valley, California. N6R will operate 1800 UTC on June 6th to 1900 UTC on June 28th using various modes on 80 meters through 10 Gigahertz. This will be the ninth year of Field Day operations from the Presidential Library. More is on-line at www.vcars.org (N6ZE)

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DX

In DX, NK0S says that he is currently converting the paper logs of VQ9HB, to electronic format so they can be uploaded to Logbook to the World. After the logs are uploaded NK0S will act as the QSL Manager for card requests for VQ9HB's operation between December of 1989 and May of 1990.

KB4CRT will be active as from Monserrat as VP2MRT between June 12-19th. His operation will include CW, SSB, possibly PSK, and the June VHF Contest. Asian stations are suggested to look for him on 20 meters between 1200 and 1300 U-T-C. QSL via KB4CRT.

DU1UGZ has been in Dhaka Bangladesh since April 12th and will be there until about June 20th. His callsign is S21UGZ and is operating SSB and RTTY mainly on 80 and 40 meters with some activity on the other High Frequency bands including 12 and 17 meters. QSL as he directs on the air.

K7WZB, and K9WZB, will stay on from the Cayman Islands through May 6. They will sign ZF2ZB using SSB, CW, RTTY and PSK 31 on 160 through 6 meters. QSLs only direct to Garry Fisher, K9WZB.

Tunisian scout special event station TS1LYMC can be found working in CW, SSB, RTTY, PSK and SSTV 80 through 10 meters. It will be operational through April 30th. QSL only direct to TS1LYMC, 33 Rue Plaine Lune Borj Louzir, Ariana, 2073 Tunis, Tunisia.

DL2SBY and DF1SR will be active from Lichtenstein through May 4th on 80 through 10 meters using CW, SSB and RTTY. There will also be some operation on 13 and 23 centimeters for weak signal E-M-E experiments as well. Two separate callsigns for this operation with DL2SBY portable HB0 for the High Frequency bands and DF1SR stroke HB0 used for E-M-E. QSL via DL2SBY, either direct or via the bureau.

Lastly, CT1FBF reports that the Portuguese ham radio national society has just concluded the installation of station CS5BLA which is the first multi-band beacon cluster in Portugal. Transmitters operate on 50.076, 144.410, 432.425 MHz and 1.296.825 MHz. QSN reports go to cs1rla <dot>arla <at> gmail <dot>com.

(Above from various DX news sources)

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THAT FINAL ITEM: IT THINKS IT'S A POLICE SCANNER

And finally this week the story of a toy broadcast band radio that thinks it's a VHF and UHF police scanner. Here's John Lego, VK3BUI.

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The German powers that be are investigating a kids' miniature Mickey Mouse radio which apparently entertains nippers with police radio traffic.

The Chinese-made novelty came with issue 12 of Micky Maus magazine. Hamburg police confirmed: "We've received reports and detectives are finding out whether it's in violation of telecommunications law."

A representative of publisher insisted the radio had been "scrupulously tested at an institute for toy safety" and "should only be able to tune into normal radio stations".

The statement further offered a typically Teutonic solution to inadvertent Police snooping, ordering the magazine's readers: "The radio is exclusively designed for listening to music. Everything else is not allowed."

I'm John, VK3BUI.

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Now, what was it that the late actor Brodrick Crawford used to say on the 1950's T-V series Highway Patrol? Oh yes: 2150, clear. (WIA News)

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB, the Southgate News and Australia's W-I-A News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is newsline@arnewsline.org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), P.O. Box 660937, Arcadia, California 91066.

A reminder that the nominating period for the 2009 Amateur Radio Newsline Young Ham of the Year Award is now open. Complete details are on our website at www.arnewsline.org. Just scroll down to the words "2009 YHOTY Nominations Now Open" and click for more information and an official nominating form.

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, I'm Don Wilbanks, AE5DW, saying 73 and we thank you for listening.

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